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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/083,544	02/27/2002	Ryo Ishibashi	500.41255X00	5575

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ANTONELLI TERRY STOUT AND KRAUS
SUITE 1800
1300 NORTH SEVENTEENTH STREET
ARLINGTON, VA 22209

[REDACTED] EXAMINER

YEE, DEBORAH

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
	1742

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Applicant No.	Applicant(s)
	10/083,544	ISHIBASHI ET AL.
	Examiner Deborah Yee	Art Unit 1742
-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --		
Period for Reply		
A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication. - If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely. - If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication. - Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). - Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b). 		
Status		
1) <input type="checkbox"/> Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____. 2a) <input type="checkbox"/> This action is FINAL. 2b) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This action is non-final. 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under <i>Ex parte Quayle</i> , 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.		
Disposition of Claims		
4) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Claim(s) <u>1-12</u> is/are pending in the application. 4a) Of the above claim(s) <u>4-12</u> is/are withdrawn from consideration. 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed. 6) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Claim(s) <u>1-3</u> is/are rejected. 7) <input type="checkbox"/> Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to. 8) <input type="checkbox"/> Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.		
Application Papers		
9) <input type="checkbox"/> The specification is objected to by the Examiner. 10) <input type="checkbox"/> The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) <input type="checkbox"/> accepted or b) <input type="checkbox"/> objected to by the Examiner. Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a). 11) <input type="checkbox"/> The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) <input type="checkbox"/> approved b) <input type="checkbox"/> disapproved by the Examiner. If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action. 12) <input type="checkbox"/> The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.		
Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120		
13) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f). a) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All b) <input type="checkbox"/> Some * c) <input type="checkbox"/> None of: 1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Certified copies of the priority documents have been received. 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____. 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)). * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.		
14) <input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application). a) <input type="checkbox"/> The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received. 15) <input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.		
Attachment(s)		
1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____. 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) ____ 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____		

DETAILED ACTION

Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:

- I. Claims 1 to 3, drawn to austenitic stainless steel alloy composition, classified in class 148, subclass 325.
- II. Claims 4 to 12, drawn to method of milling steel powder and consolidating at high temperature, classified in class 75, subclass 513.

The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

Inventions of group I and group II are unrelated. Inventions are unrelated if it can be shown that they are not disclosed as capable of use together and they have different modes of operation, different functions, or different effects (MPEP § 806.04, MPEP § 808.01). In the instant case the different inventions have different functions because group I is a steel alloy composition with no process limitations of making and group II is directed to a method for manufacturing a sintered powdered product by milling powder and consolidating twice at 700 to 900C.

Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by their different classification, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

During a telephone conversation with Mr. William Solomon on April 29,2003 a provisional election was made with traverse to prosecute the invention of group I, claims 1 to 3. Affirmation of this election must be made by applicant in replying to this Office action. Claims 4 to 12 are withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1 to 3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese patent 54-51922 or US Patent No. 5,908,486 (Flinn et al).

JP'922 in Tables 1 to 3 on page 111 and Flinn in Table 2 of column 6, each discloses austenitic stainless steel alloys which meet the recited claimed composition. Moreover, Flinn on lines 1 to 34 in column 8 teaches a fine grain size of 50nm for Ti, V, or Nb carbide/nitride ppts and similar to applicant's present invention results in higher yield and tensile strength. Even though Flinn does not specifically teach carbonitride as recited by the claim, such would be expected since compositional limitations are met and carbides and nitrides would form some carbonitrides. In regard to JP'922, the reference in Figure 1 on page 113 discloses fine grain size of 10 to 11 ASTM which would appear to be closely within applicant's claimed range.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1 to 3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The recited term "several" is undefined and therefore indefinite.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Deborah Yee whose telephone number is 703-308-1102. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 6:30 to 4:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Roy King can be reached on 703-308-1146. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-872-9310 for regular communications and 703-873-9311 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0661.



DEBORAH YEE
PRIMARY EXAMINER

dy
April 29, 2003